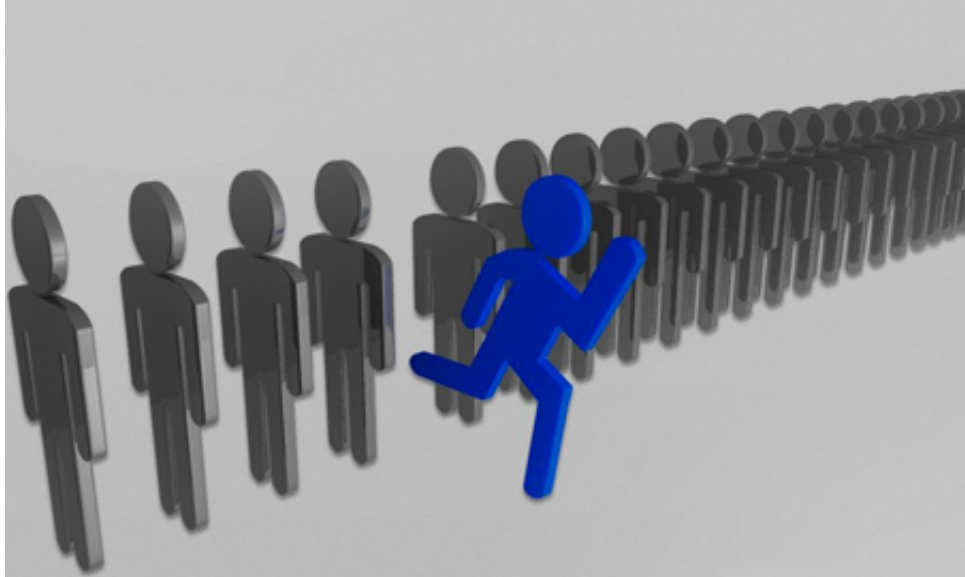


Freedom comes with Responsibility



Freedom exists through a delicate balance of you having the courage to live with the responsibility of thinking and acting as an individual.

Are you as free as you would like to be?

Many people seem to trade freedom for security and the opportunity to shirk personal responsibility. Religions, companies, groups, communities can all be guilty of high-jacking your freedom.

Make a significant difference to how you feel this year, write down the areas of your life that you would like more FREEDOM. Do one thing a month towards taking more responsibility in those areas for the rest of the year. To help you stay accountable; tell someone you respect and ask him or her to hold you accountable by asking each month, what you have done?

[Email me and let me know how you go!](#)

Mark Collins

DIY Agreements



Business owners often need to write their own everyday agreements and it is critical for them to be clear and in easy to understand English.

Two suggestions:

State clearly what you agree to, what the intention is and what the result will be.

- 1.
2. Consider this clause, which can change everything: “Any disagreements over the interpretation of this agreement will be resolved through binding, informal arbitration. Both of us agree to hire a non-involved solicitor, submit up to five pages of material to state our case, and abide by his/her decision.”

Mark Collins

Challenge your self over Christmas with three opposites!

Growth only occurs when you do something different from what you previously would have done.

This is without a doubt the best time to challenge yourself to lift your expectations and open your mind.

Write down three things that you will be doing between Christmas and New Year that you are prepared to do exactly the opposite to what you

normally would do. (this might be as un-threatening as being early for an event if you are notoriously late) Of course then you need to follow through – don't tell anyone the reason why you have decided to behave differently.

Write down what you identified as a consequence of behaving differently as it will help you understand the power of becoming the success that you were supposed to be!!

Best wishes for 2015 and thanks to all those that regularly read my blog and encourage me with your feed back.

I will be taking a break over Christmas but I will send you something thought provoking again after the 21st of January.



Mark Collins

Contradiction is our friend!



It is not only what you do that makes you successful it is also **what you don't do!**

But everything starts by someone doing something.
Be the initiator and decide what you want to do.

Mark Collins

Heard of the 3 GETS?



Get Clear - This is the vision of what the goal is

Get in Agreement - This is all parties committing their 100% effort

Get Started - Sounds easy but it requires a lot of effort to start.

Problems with any of the above and it will all be in vain.

So GET HELP, this is a strength not a weakness!

My first call is free!

Mark Collins

Opportunity Cost



The amazing gift of now, today, this year, that is so often misused.

Every day we are gifted amazing opportunities of time, health, friendships and many more things. We get to choose what we do with them, how we do it, what we think about them and how we feel about them. All of these things we have some control over and when you are managing all the things that you can influence and control to the absolute maximum of your ability right now, you will live an incredible life.

So appreciate and do more with what you have got and you will be happier and more fulfilled.

This applies to your work life too, regardless of if you own the business or just work in it your opportunity is to commit to making, selling or giving your best for today as you will never get today again and somehow the accumulative effect will be part of tomorrow.

Mark Collins

Contemporary Old

There are hundreds of examples in the food space where technology has changed the way we make products but equally there is a niche for “The way it used to be”. Here’s an example of a product being remarketed to great effect.

Mark Collins

Your Lucky List

Stay humble it will serve you well. When you feel like you are overwhelmed, not making the progress you desire, feel you aren't succeeding- create a list of "How lucky you are".

If you are having trouble getting started, look at the news (briefly- too much can be depressing) and consider the plight of war ravaged communities and countries, the future of kids that have lost their parents with Ebola, living through a natural disaster etc.

Your lucky list can be kept to help remind you your problems are nearly always resolvable!



Mark Collins

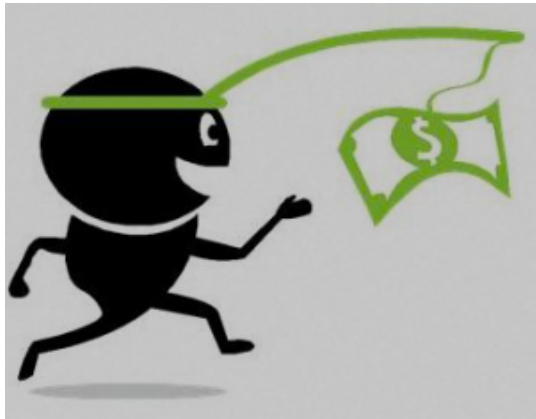
Even Mistakes can be Good



Significant success results from realising, even mistakes can be good! This last week one of my very successful and highly accomplished clients realised she had made a mistake and dropped the ball on an opportunity, she was mortified. When you have very high personal standards it is sometimes hard to see such mistakes positively, but it can be the catalyst to realising a system improvement is necessary.

Mark Collins

What's in it for the Customer?



Question what's in it for the customer, continuously. Many good successes are ruined for the convenience of staff, company compliance, squeezing an extra 50 cents profit or just on the bosses whim.

Mark Collins

3 Minute Attitude Audit



Do a 3 minute attitude audit -in your department or business! Consider each persons attitude on each of their three current projects or objectives, rate them on a positive/negative scale (10 being extremely positive 1 being totally negative). Whilst different opinions must be encouraged it is very apparent if a person isn't part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

Mark Collins

World famous but only for one block

MLC Café on Queen Street, Auckland, is a little café in the bottom of the Scenic Hotel. It has a great location and only needs to be famous to the people that work, live or frequent the space in a one block radius.

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves to focus small for big results. Being World famous requires a lot of sustained effort but is achievable for every business when we define the limits of our world. The secret is about the customer experience, what you offer and your uniqueness!



Mark Collins

Eliminate expensive transportation costs and save money where possible!



It costs \$2bn per annum to transport water to the astronauts on the International Space Station (6 tonnes per person). When you buy locally and sell locally you substantially remove distribution costs, which will either improve your profit or the value you offer your customers.

Encourage Risk Taking

Our market place has never been more orientated to businesses that are agile innovative and that can move quickly on new products and opportunities.



Speed beats size in our current market place so make sure you use your opportunities. Every business needs people that have a little bit of entrepreneurial “can do”, so make sure you value and cultivate that spirit in your managers and team leaders. Encouraging a little bit of risk taking, within some careful controls of course, but this one thing can revitalize your culture and employee responsiveness, which will increase your customer experience! Identify at the beginning what the parameters are and if necessary have them moderate each other but also remember to recognise team efforts even if something fails.

Let me know how you go?

Mark Collins

Freedom is a state of mind

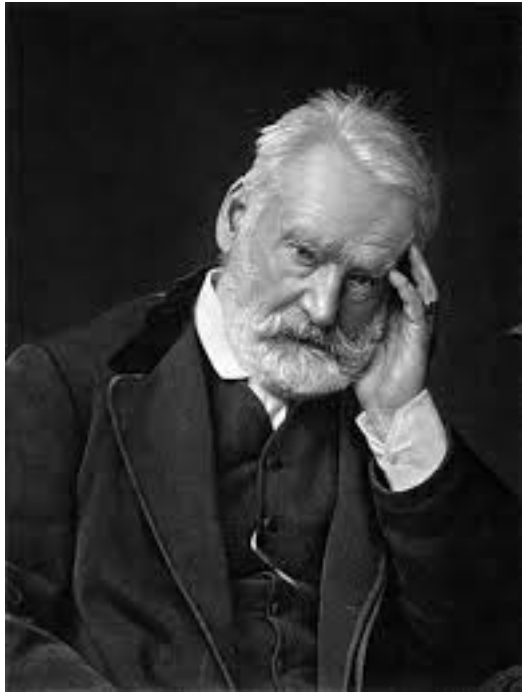
Freedom is a concept but is also a state of mind.

How are you using it in your business to contribute to your personal successes? It could be your largest under used asset...



Mark Collins

Thought without Action



As a consultant I often provide thinking and experience to create opportunities, answers, options for my clients yet at the same time know that someone will need to provide action.

We are all responsible for producing action so make sure your action is worth the effort by considering the following. Thought without action, will likely produce disappointing results just the same as, action without thought?

Mark Collins

Creating customer value

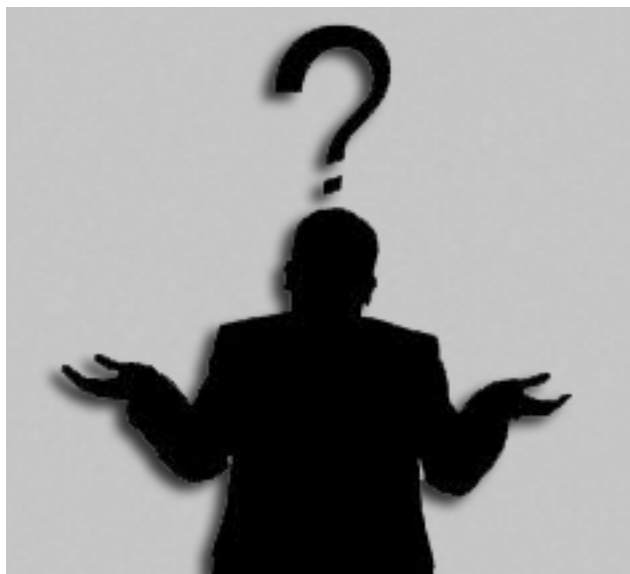
Creating customer value is best achieved by knowing what your customers want. Don't ask them, study their behaviour!



In some cases they will tell you it is a price issue, when their behaviour will show you it is really a problem of insufficient value.

Mark Collins

Fear of Failure



If you or your team isn't succeeding it may be a Fear of Failure. This problem can be addressed with surprising results just by reversing your approach and the questions you ask.

Rather than asking your people for an update on their results ask them to tell you three things they have done this week that has resulted in failure. After just two or three weeks your approach will have changed the focus of your team and at the same time have encouraged them to try new ways.

This may feel counter intuitive but it is only a stepping stone and after a few more weeks change your question again. Now ask them for, one failure and two successes. This simple small change will encourage people to have a go and learn that small failures are part of every success.

Mark Collins

Pursuing Balance



When pursuing balance, people often forget to include “challenge and growth.” Keep your pursuit dynamic and view it as a daily ritual and not a destination.

Mark Collins

Why else?

Learn why something works but also seek to understand why else it works.

Mark Collins

Be Unique

Be unique, as talked about by Seth Godin, become the Purple Cow. If all your competition is trying to be “better” “cheaper” “bigger” pursue the only space that is worth anything, be Unique!



Mark Collins

Thinking and acting on your own thoughts



Whilst it is universally accepted that your performance will be substantially improved with a coach or a mentor, you shouldn't stop thinking and acting on your own thoughts. I believe a good coach should provoke, motivate, empower, balance, compliment hold you accountable, bring new insights, broaden your thinking as well as create focus. You should hear the advice and ideas but not always listen after all it is your business and life!

Mark Collins

“Making Sure” has value!

Make sure your people are doing everything you are charging your client for.



I am having a block wall built at home at the moment and I engaged a block laying company to do the work, unbeknown to me they employed a self employed block layer (using a modern business model of aggregating). I took about 2 months to excavate the previous wall and lay the footings and when ready on the date predicted rang to say I was finished.

The aggregator had Firths deliver the blocks the very next day and the block layer started the day after. It was only then that I found out the block layer worked for himself and from that point I expected I would need to manage my expectations through him. But much to my surprise a couple of days later I received a phone call from the aggregator who was ringing to check on my satisfaction with the work thus far before he authorizing the blocks to be pumped fill of concrete and completion of stage one. He said he had been to inspect the work and was extremely knowledgeable about the job and the quality of workmanship.

Highlighting that he had noticed a variation of alignment where new met old due to the footpath not being straight. (I couldn't see it even when I looked) He said he would instruct the plasterer to straighten this by re-plastering the old wall out at no extra charge.

I felt I had just experienced exceptional service just because the guy actually made sure he delivered on what he had agreed to and had delivered on his standards not just accepted the standards of who was laying the blocks.

Many contract food and cleaning providers could gain valuable kudos by doing this better.

Mark Collins

Get ready for the future



My next newsletter due out around the start of September will feature a glimpse of the future. Being well educated and entrepreneurial will increase in importance as we anticipate yet more technology and robotic processes taking out further layers of low skilled jobs. More processes being mechanized, more programmable equipment, cooking and waiting areas are all under threat. Make sure you are subscribed <http://markcollinsnzltd.co.nz/category/newsletters/>

Mark Collins

Great answers Always Surprise this is true for all customer experiences!

What does our end game look like?



The simple question of, **“What does our end game look like?”**

Turn it in to an image if you can – if not the very least you must do is write down a very clear description!

IT WILL:

- confirm you are clear on your objective
- help you communicate your task to those that will help you
- help you sell the benefits to a purchaser
- motivate you when things get tough
- keep you on track and help you not get distracted
- help you quantify the value
- help you measure your progress

Mark Collins

Your unique adjustment mechanism

Staying on course is complex, who would have ever thought the following is the instructions for going straight.



Adjustment is critical to success: right, left, right, right, no adjustment, no adjustment, tiny right, tiny right, tiny left, right, no adjustment.

Working in any of the different jobs in your business requires some sort of mechanism to stay on track without losing sight of what the objective is.

Your managers and staff are that mechanism, so make sure you share the objectives, expectations and authority so as to empower them to make the necessary adjustments.

Mark Collins

Why, why is important:



reason

It helps us understand

It allows us to develop purpose

Put with “not” and you get leverage

It allows logic to support emotion

It allows us to create

Mark Collins

Protecting your brand



An old fashion coat of arms, Scottish tartan, tribal tatoo are all collective brands. The families, tribes and clans all protected their collective brands with intense passion and uncompromising strength and courage. These are the same attributes you need to protect your Brand!!

Mark Collins

Places rich in opportunity



Nearly – Anywhere you see this word it indicates a “almost there”

Different – Alternatives often have hidden benefits

Spaces between – Usually created by the presence of things that preexist and cost you nothing extra to leverage.

Waste – Something that currently cost money to dispose of (materials with credit attached)

Mark Collins

Richness of Self

A person with a plan of today or this year or life knows forkful lament and more pressure than a person with out one who feels no pressure but has no purpose.

Purpose and self belief seem to be linked along with self value which I think is another word for “richness of self” or wealth.

Mark Collins

Reason and Purpose



If you don't know what your reason or purpose is that doesn't necessarily mean they don't exist. However you are at risk to become a servant of someone else's reason and purpose.

Experience freedom and establish your own reason and purpose, start by setting some goals.

Mark Collins

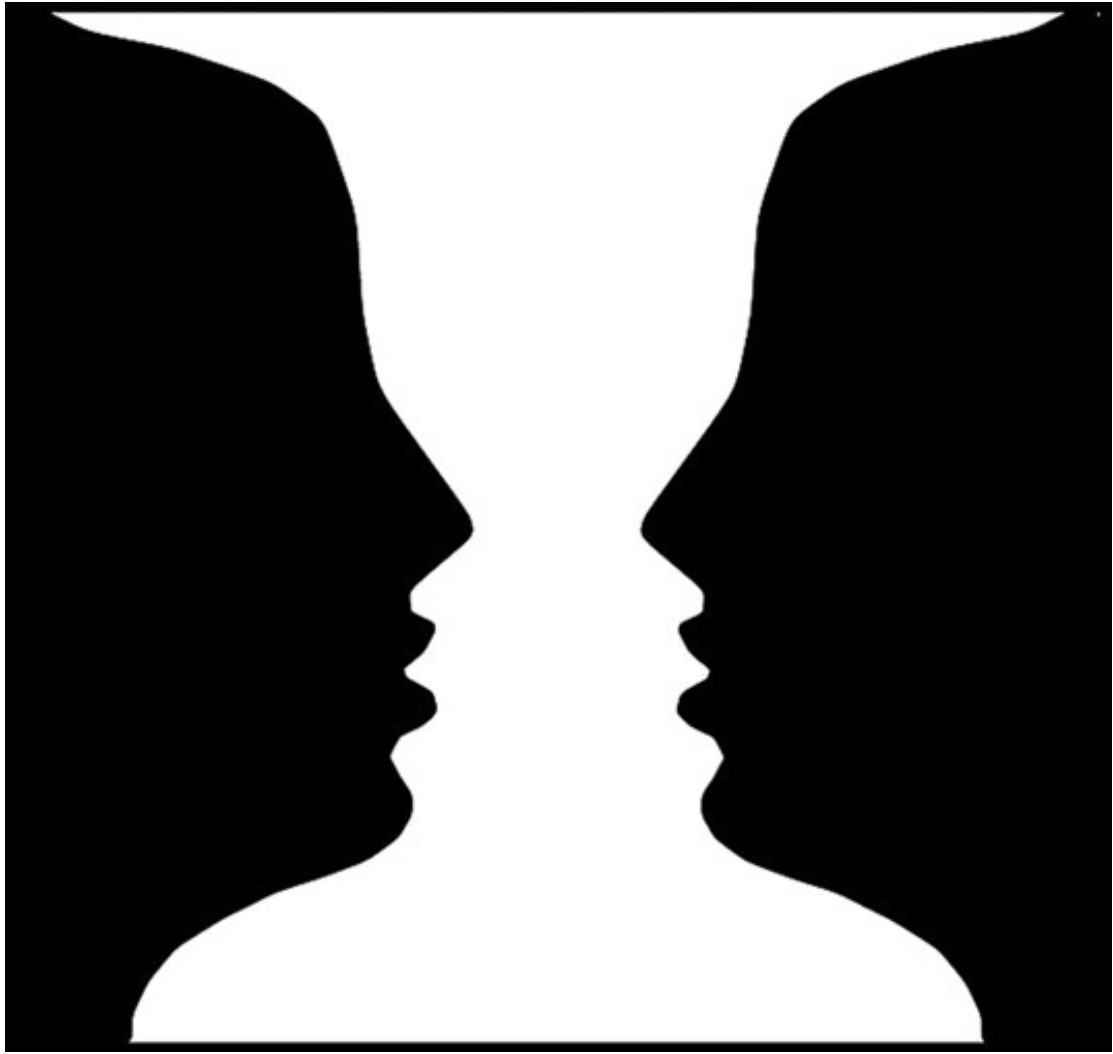
Spaces between

Mary Archibald my friend and art teacher often talks about negative spaces (these are the shapes formed between two objects ie the shape between your legs, under a bridge)

It is good to teach yourself, to see these spaces in business, as this is usually where the opportunities are. In these spaces you will find waste of all sorts, redundant equipment, underserved customers, underperforming staff. These are all easy opportunities to improve your business and your profit.

Try this also when looking at time, particularly between diary appointments.

[Contact me if you need help with this concept.](#)



Mark Collins

Measurement is not the goal



Most businesses operate POS “point of sale”, transaction and customer management software that they bought essentially to collect important business data and measure how well the business is performing.

The collection of measurements and data is a worthless, waste of time and effort unless you use it to improve your approach, processes and the behavior of your staff.

I suggest everyone adopts this 3 step approach:

1. Have at least 3 key goals (no more than 7 until you are very experienced) that will make a difference to your business.
2. Identify what measurements you can get from your operating systems to indicate your progress towards achieving your goals. This measurement should be taken at regular intervals daily, weekly or monthly and reviewed for change against the previous measurements
3. Adjust your effort and approach to develop a trend improvement towards your goal.

Mark Collins

Become exceptionally desirable!



Ask yourself, “what do I know about my customer?”

Write down, what you know about your customers and customer groups, needs, desires and wants. Now ask your customer facing staff to add to the list. Validate the list. (if you don’t know how ring me to discuss). The objective here is to identify the top twenty things that are important to your customers and what you currently do to meet their expectation.

Identify one thing and improve it this week, next week pick another thing and so on, this is a continuous process. You will never stop doing this but you will become a lot more successful customers to purchase off.

Mark Collins

Are you ready to hear?



A friend and I go walking early every Sunday morning, and this week he said, “If only someone had told me that when I was twenty five. “

In my experience we get the information we need at the time we need it, but often it is hidden amongst a pile of other, often contradictory advice. The key seems to be more about recognising good advice when it's given. I suggest two things are seriously likely to improve your success in this regard: one is training your self to stay open to different ways of considering the situation or opportunity, the second being to develop and maintain a small trusted group of people whose opinion and advice you value.

Mark Collins

The power and rhythm of “your” beat

You only need to listen to any piece of music or stand and watch the waves on a beach to realise the power and importance of rhythm.

You too have a rhythm and the more you are in sync with it the less stress you will feel. Watch for clues in others as to what their rhythm may be, fast tempo or slow and heavy. There are many words that may help you with this early awareness but two very good words to start with are: Weak and Powerful. When your rhythm is powerful you are closer to being in sync and can expect big things to happen.

Mark Collins



Buying and Selling Time?



Stop employing people for a block of time, and instead employ people to deliver value. Convert all your business thinking and documents to measure and reward value and results.

In the food industry most contracts would still need to document when the work needs to take place IE between 8 am and 4.30 pm. Other than that, move the focus of all other thinking to the value delivered.

This needs to be part of the person's job to be involved in measuring and commenting on their value delivery. IE a waiter needs to know how many customers he served and the average check value, a sales person may need to measure the average \$value of their sales calls per day.

Mark Collins

Are you Pretending?



I just did a review of my social media profile. I checked in with my business and personal values, looked at relationships with my family, friends, staff and customers.

I pride my self in my authenticity but there is still some work to do to align my behavior and projected image with the real me.

I challenge you to do this same review on yourself, get honest and become the real you.

This is something you need to practice everyday, for most of us the path to Authenticity requires relentless maintenance but the effort will make an incredible difference. Save all the time you waste being a pretender.

Mark Collins

Minding your Diet



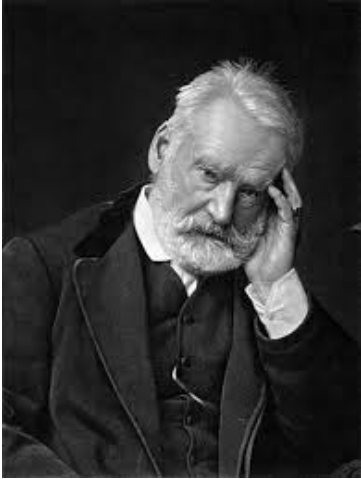
Given that eating appears to be a mind triggered process- (over eating and anorexic disorders) For better or worse most of us manually manage this but on the whole the population is still overweight.

How far away are the mobile phone apps that will some how feed the mind and counter the Anorexic trigger of, “I am over weight”, or the over eating issue of feeling good when eating. Is there an opportunity for someone to create a set of psychology based apps to replace the chemical and drug related treatments like the nicotine patch treatment for giving up cigarettes.

This would certainly fuel the change in the healthy eating lifestyle space and the ever changing the food industry.

Mark Collins

Encourage “your people” to contribute to ways of improving your business



“A man is not idle because he is absorbed in thought.

There is a visible labour and there is an invisible labour of the mind.”

Victor Hugo (1812 – 1885)

Mark Collins

Bloody Wake Up!



Your opportunity in life isn't limited to what you can exploit. Do something good in this world!

Appreciate the fact that you use and enjoy for free many of the worlds wonderful gifts that you use everyday. Clean rainwater, warmth and the brightness of the sun, day and night, clean air, free swims in the sea, people, friendship, purpose, life etc etc.

Do something everyday (even if it is small) to nurture the world that gives you these gifts.

Mark Collins

Context is Critically Important



Over many years some of you have heard me bagging on about the importance to influence the context of what you do and say!

If I were to ask you, “what colour is the orange ball” you will be more likely to say orange than any other colour even though it could have many other answer’s.

Marketing our business benefits from the same principle, if we present our food as fresh, and tasty it is more likely our customers will enjoy it.

Mark Collins

Strategy vs Action



The difference between a good and bad strategy is often the difference between success and failure. I spend considerable time helping people with strategy but only becomes worth something when the strategy is then converted into action.

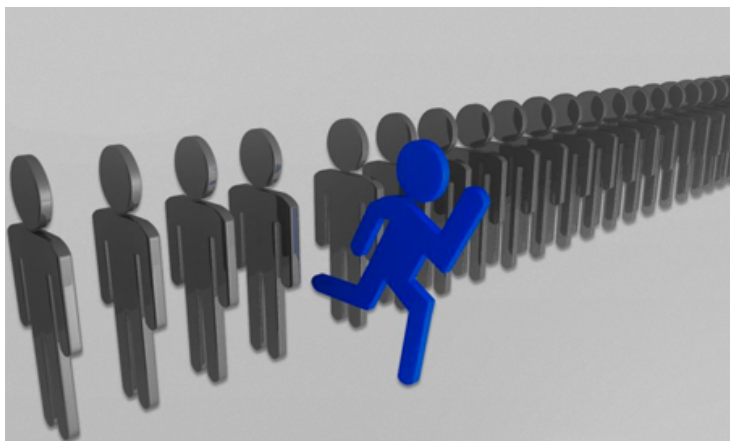
Mark Collins

Simple is Complex...

and so can be the journey to its discovery. Just make sure you aren't the one making it complex. Start to simplify your life today by accepting the things you can't change.

Mark Collins

“Motivation”



Exceptional motivation is easier when you know exactly what your objective is and also easier when your situation is demanding your reaction.

But exceptionally motivated individuals create these demands both on themselves and on the group around them.

Value these people that create initiative and generate the energy and urgency in your business. They are motivating those around them and are your leaders even if they aren't always in charge.

Mark Collins

Four of my friends top business essentials

1. Don't allow expenses to exceed income
2. Collect Debts
3. Look after your best customers
4. Look after your best employees.

Mark Collins

Contradiction & Inconsistency



This is a bold statement but the presence of these two words in your business will be stealing \$1,000's from your annual profit!

Start to address this today by searching right through your business, not just in what you say, but significantly more in what you do and what your customers experience. You will likely need to get help to see what you can't see but it will be worth it.

Identify these two words as the enemy and work relentlessly to remove them from your business and culture.

Mark Collins

Right for one customer can look completely wrong for another

Solution: get clear about what customers you are set up to please and then attract more of the same. In other words specialize in a specific type of customer and clearly tell all potential customers this is what you do! Become the absolute best at meeting their needs!!



Mark Collins

Looking for the questions?



Consider we might have some things wrong? What would our world look like if we thought the “Answer is followed by the Question”

In our universe of millions of answers we only understand them and their value when we can identify the right question.

Mark Collins

Knowing who grew the cabbages in my coleslaw will not be enough



Being able to prove the origin of ALL your ingredients, suppliers processes, suppliers supplier's etc. Absolute place of origin, how it has got here, who has touched it, stored it and how long has it taken to get there will be critical knowledge.

As we see more and more public concern over food chain security the onus will fall on all successful companies to **prove** the reliable source of their ingredients. The latest evidence shows huge populous distrust in both USA and China of the safety of their respective countries food chain.

This will become an integral part of every company's marketing story and will need to be verifiable and independently audited. This is a great opportunity for NZ primary and added value food exporters.

I recommend you integrate this thinking into your business plan now so it can become part of the way you think and an increased focus in your food safety plan.

Don't forget to tell your customers – they really do want to know.

Seeding your Idea



Many great ideas need time to develop and mature and therefore are best tested many times through their development, right from when they are just an inkling of thought.

When you treat your ideas like seeds you will protect, nurture, feed and care for them. In the right care they will grow and your rewards will come when you harvest the fruits of your labour.

Mark Collins

Break every thing into stages



Every goal or project breaks into natural parts or stages.

Respect the value of a stage done well as it will add to the size of your result. If done well this example will yield a result greater than its parts:

1. Research opportunity
2. Develop strategy
3. Implementation
4. Measure
5. Refine process

Mark Collins

Creating Sustainable Success Matrix

Desire + Energy	= Enthusiasm
Enthusiasm + Focus	= Early Success
Early Success + Perseverance	= Momentum
Momentum + Profitable Scalability	= Sustainable Success

Mark Collins

Dr John- a master class from my dying friend



My friend John Kramer was awarded his PHd at a special ceremony at Mary Potter Hospice, last weekend – his thesis being on Food Safety.

Sadly he is terminally ill with a very aggressive bone cancer. He said to me finally being a doctor was a very proud moment but unfortunately he won't live long enough for it to be of any advantage to him.

In that moment I realized the benefit of setting goals is paid out incrementally during the journey to achieve them in the form of belief and purpose. John has incredible strength and courage and is an inspiration to all of us to work hard at being the best we can right up to clocking out.

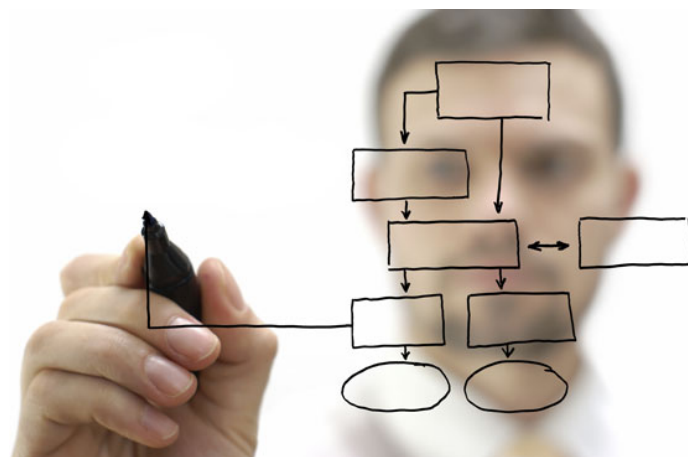
I hope I can show the same commitment to my goals and courage as I enter the shadow of my life!!

Mark Collins

Every business can benefit from better focus and efficiency!

This is very short and fast so watch it and ask yourself what in your business would yield better profits if you improved the speed and efficiency of that one thing??

Every healthy business has goals that it is striving to achieve.



Clarity of the goal and the **strategy** you decide to adopt are the first two key things that will decide

if you will be successful in reaching your goal.
Clarity intensifies your focus and delivers faster results. Deciding on the best strategy saves time, money and delivers better results. Once you have clarity spend a little bit of extra time on strategy.

Let me know how you go!

Mark Collins

Do some research

What do your customers think:

Put some effort, time and money towards actually finding out what your existing and potential customers really think about your business, products and services.

It's much easier to improve when you know what is wrong so don't be scared by the bad news!



What do people want:

Put a few strategies together, try different approaches but find out what your customers want. Learn to listen out for this information, it will likely sound like: I really only want something small, I am trying to lose a few kilos, or I am too busy to eat lunch. Make your products and services about solving groups of customers problems IE Snack size portions, packed so they can eat while working –just unwrapping bite size pieces one at a time.

What are the 3 most critical issues for your customers to repurchase your products regularly?

Act on your research!!!

Mark Collins

Why is change so electrifying?

Because by its own definition change involves things that move. The interplay of all the different combinations of influencers on the status quo creates excitement, unpredictability, and opportunity.

The food industry is a hot bed of change and as a Food Business Expert my job is to create solutions to problems and provide insight into opportunities and help my clients form winning strategies. My inherent interest is to understand what affect one thing has on another like a thousand theoretical chess moves but specific to my clients business.

Look over this list and suggest any missing influencers'?

- People
- environment
- perception
- size
- relativity
- era
- aesthetic
- belief
- skills
- understanding
- leverage
- speed
- intent
- resources
- chemical
- accumulation
- form
- relationship
- Point in time
- attitude
- context
- training
- knowledge
- tools
- application
- enthusiasm
- determination

Mark Collins

You are probably incredibly Wealthy



I would define wealth as the accumulation of something valuable. ie: freedom, knowledge, skill, money, assets, power, respect, status, friendship, happiness and love.

Wealth is often synonymous with success yet too many people I meet don't acknowledge or understand what their wealth is.

What would you be prepared to do to learn how to use your current wealth to attain the type of wealth you desire?

Mark Collins

Improving the profit in your business



Improving the profit in your business is usually much easier to identify if you aren't emotionally involved. Get an outside perspective and identify the things you can't see through your emotional filter. Then listen to them and implement at least the best suggestion. There are many ways to fail but less likely when you get help and then implement.

Mark Collins

When the data doesn't match!



Recognise when the data doesn't match and trust your gut feeling!

A young man doesn't meditate and feels there is something missing, maybe even a bit anxious.

As an old man he meditates every day and feels a sense of achievement, calm and complete.

How does he know whether it is meditation or age that is giving him the different feeling?

Mark Collins

Clearly it is easy



Good results are often as easy as **Clearly** identifying what you want to have happen, **Clearly** communicate this to your customers, staff and suppliers. measure your progress to ward realizing your goal and **Clearly** communicate that, and the repeat it until you succeed.

Clearly most of us fail through lack of clarity!

Mark Collins

Great customer experience isn't an accident!



Excellence is achievable by every business just by repeatedly putting themselves in their customers position.

Last week I made a mistake with my “e”booking on a Jetstar flight, there was no loss to the airline as I booked my ticket departing on the 8th and returning on the 8th. I meant to depart on the 7th and return on the 8th. Their process for dealing with the situation was totally inept, I was treated like I was an inconvenience, no one had any discretion or authority to deviate from a company directive out of Australia, the specialist on the information and ticketing desk couldn’t work their computer system to issue a new ticket and \$200 and 24 minutes later I was on my way to the flight feeling like I had been punished for having made the mistake to fly with Jetstar.

By contrast I had to buy a replacement printer that same week which I bought from Office Max. The customer service rep emailed me all my choices and I duly ordered it and it arrived the following day. A couple of days later I received a letter and a sticker typed up with all the purchase codes and names of the ink cartridges and consumables it used. This meant I could stick it on the printer and when I need to order replacements it will be easier to find the right products. Thoughtful and adding value!

Mark Collins

Courage and Freedom



As a business owner or executive you will from time to time have to face challenging situations. Front them head on, commit your resources to understanding them fast, decide on a strategy and then lead the implementation of your solution. Find the courage to free yourself of fear and procrastination.

Get help early – some of us are better at problem solving than others.

Mark

Get clear about “the right things”



When you are really clear about exactly what you are trying to do – (a simple business plan is essential) Achieving the **RIGHT THINGS** get easier.

Measure the right things

Reward the right things

Spend time on the right things!

Mark

Treat your suppliers with the same respect as your customers!

All our businesses are co dependant on our suppliers. When a supplier relationship is such that you both benefit it should make you more competitive (this doesn't always mean cheaper) and both businesses should share in the success of increased business.



Win-Win isn't periodically and repeatedly driving down the purchase price, increasing rebates, demanding 60 and 90 day payment terms and continually imposing increased compliance costs.

A good test of how well you understand win/win is to identify what the actual cost or gain is to your supplier every time you change or request something. IE if you request a 30 day extension in payment terms and if over draft facilities are at 12% you are effectively adding 1% onto your suppliers costs. This cost drops straight to their bottom line so if they were making 5 % they are now making 4% which is 20% less. Obviously double sales volumes will more than neutralize this and deliver benefits for both of you.

Work together and help each other!

Mark

Creating helpful habits!

The trick is measuring and reminding yourself regularly: Search the net for habit building Apps for your phone, some are free, but I use “Way of Life“ App which cost a little over \$6 as a one off payment? It graphs your performance reminds you of your goal, requires no set up and is very convenient to tick the daily tasks when done.

Carry on with this routine until you manage to get 21 consecutive ticks in a row on anyone task, this is the accepted measure of having created a new habit.



If you are finding this too difficult establish a reward and or a penalty – Les Probert, a friend of mine taught me the \$20 trick, it is genius. Make yourself accountable by giving your friend your monthly new habit targets and a \$20 note. If when he/she checks in at the end of the month you can't produce the app showing you have succeeded they cut up the \$20 bill. (watching someone cutting up your money is very action invoking)

Use it yourself and teach your staff, great for your managers when introducing new daily procedures, exercise, measuring marketing etc.

Mark

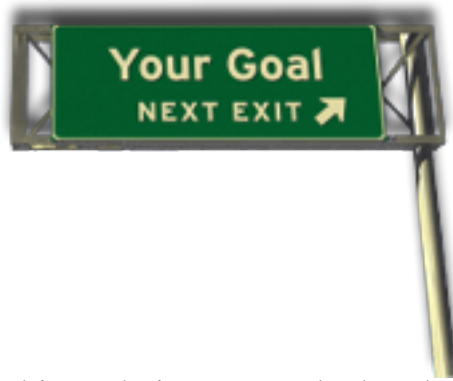
When pricing your products consider 3 things :

1. What price will your customer pay?
2. What does it cost you to make?
3. What do you need to make to cover your costs?

Everyone should regularly check their products against this criteria and develop strategies to adjust their prices. If you need help subscribe to my

blog or for urgent help [email me](#) .
Mark

Goal setters are valuable



If a person can't follow through and achieve their own goals then how can they follow through and achieve a goal for the business.

Make it a prerequisite skill for all supervisor and managerial positions. Run training on personal goal setting for all other staff, make it optional and not in work time. How many people you get along will tell you a lot about your current culture.

Mark

Problems are Good!



They stimulate: change, improvement, action and thinking. They challenge the status quo and add a sense of worth to your life.

Hidden in and amongst our problems are also our opportunities. Appreciate and embrace them and overtime the idea of a problem as good will not be so counter intuitive!

Mark

Smiles increase Sales!



I start most days with an early morning walk and this last week I have been running a little experiment on the people I pass. If I smile at them a few meters before we pass they nearly always smile back and say “good morning” or “hi”. If I don’t smile and just say hi about 40% will walk past with out any engagement at all.

This proves something I have known for many years and whilst important in all businesses, no where is it more important than in sales and customer service. **Improve your success by employing happy people that want to smile.** Train your existing staff on the value of a smile and insist on a genuine smile greeting every single customer. Lead by example and actively discourage people that don’t smile from staying in your employment!

Mark

Comparing Food Service Options

Modern kitchens in all areas of NZ’s hospitality and food service have the same key drivers albeit they support a variety of different service approaches. These are of course: food quality, deliverable on time and to be cost effective.

Many large establishments in the hospitality, healthcare sectors have adopted with some good success a cook chill food service process whilst the remainder of the market predominantly use cook serve.

If your kitchens or your service delivery equipment need to be replaced you really should review which food service system best suits your needs now and for the next 20 years.

There can be a lot of things to consider in making the evaluation and specialist assistance is recommended. In many ways there is more flexibility and better leverage of volume using a cook chill meal solution but they do require a lot of discipline and focus on process management than the traditional cook serve model.

It is also very important to be cognisant of the need to re-educate all staff of key changes that are rudimentary to the success of this changed food service approach. The alternatives:

- Cook Serve – The food is cooked fresh, held hot in bain-maries and or holding ovens. The food is then plated and served to the customer or alternatively transported to satellite serving points and then plated and served to the customer. The longer food is held warm the more it loses nutritional and presentational qualities.
- Cook Chill – The food is cooked and quickly chilled to below 3C, held for up to 5 days (Open Cook Chill) or 28 days in vacuumed, sealed pouches (Closed Cook Chill). The reheating process can be achieved as a bulk unit or as a plated meal. This means that the meals can be prepared in advance and if necessary transported, prior to the quick reheat process.
- Cook Freeze – The food is cooked as for cook chill and then snap frozen. This allows for storage of up to 3 months between initial cooking and rethermalisation. If being considered as a large-scale food service solution it does seem to require massive volumes to cover the significant setup cost.

I have considerable experience in the use and evaluation of different food service systems and service equipment and can help identify opportunities and solutions in all areas of your evaluation and or implementation of any food service or kitchen change.

Hints and Tips for Starting out in Food Manufacturing

Some tips and questions I wrote for a new customer starting out in food manufacturing

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If you need help contact me at thinking@markcollins.co.nz

“GLOBAL” management can kill local initiative.

As more modern businesses become global, there seems to be an ever increasing tendency to disregard the local style. There are many ways a task may be achieved and too often we see an over prescriptive approach dictated from an office in a city many km's away from where the action is. In many cases the prescribed approach may have originated or be directed from a different country! How could we manage this better? A start may be to genuinely consider the following points:

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Is the company reason believable? “Global best practice” is often not what it says. Make sure the change delivers these gains or rethink the change. This is so easy to do, and so often not done. The result is a loss of individual ownership, commitment and initiative by local managers and employees. This is passed on to the customer in the form of lack of can do, flexibility and customer focus, resulting in a loss of confidence and belief by staff and customers alike.

10 important actions to managing out sourced service provider's.

Many services are out sourced these days from catering, pest control, laundry, printing, mail services, accounting, payroll, marketing, maintenance, grounds, cleaning and the list goes on.... Just about all company's and organizations have out sourced one or more of their support services . The consequence of out sourcing services ranges from it being; very successful and efficient, to very frustrating, difficult and not cost effective. Organizations that have been successful out sourcing a service or services get: good quality, excellent customer service, effective service delivery, accountability and effective cost management. Without exception they will have all done the following things well:

1. Scoped and documented the service being out sourced.
2. Adopted a robust and thorough tender and selection process.
3. Contracted the service provider to deliver on the promises in their proposal.
4. Included incentives and penalty clauses.
5. Created flexibility so as the organisation's service need changes so does the contractor.
6. Developed appropriate KPI's.
7. Demand transparency but allow a fair profit margin on good service.
8. Measure the service provided with independent audits.
9. Maintain good communications and reiterate the area of focus.
10. Track performance throughout contract term and retender periodically.

These can be broken down into three groups – Before tendering, the tender process and then contractor management.

For more information on service contract management or assistance with the above 10 success points contact me at mark@markcollins.co.nz
